

Barriers to Leaving

Violence in Relationships

One of the most common questions about violence against women in relationships is “Why do women stay?”

Most women in abusive relationships do end up leaving.

But, this process can be a long and dangerous one.

Non-judgmental, well-informed support is essential for assisting women to be as safe as possible, whether or not they leave their abusers.

The abuser may have told the woman that she won't be able to live without him—that she will never find anyone else. This type of ongoing emotional abuse can be very damaging. She may start to believe the abuser.

The woman may be in love with the abuser, committed to “working things out,” and/or committed to raising children with him.

The woman may believe that the abuse is her fault.

The woman may not know that violence is illegal or that there are resources available.

The woman may believe that her children will be safer or better cared for if she stays.

Other Barrier s to Leaving

Violence in Relationships

Violence often continues even after a relationship has ended, through ongoing emotional and physical abuse, stalking, or long and drawn out custody and access disputes.

The abuser may have threatened to harm her, her children, other family members, and/or pets if she leaves.

He may have threatened to commit suicide or kidnap her children.

She may be financially dependent on him. Women's income usually decreases after a relationship ends, and many women face extreme poverty. She may lose her housing, and women from small communities may worry that they might have to leave their community, friends and family if the relationship ends.

A woman with a disability may depend on her partner for personal care.

Aboriginal women and women of colour may fear racist responses from service providers if they seek help. Lesbians may fear a homophobic response by the system or service provider.

The woman may not speak English.

For more information contact: 250-392-4118
